



100 Ways to Create an Environment for Success

Moving more and eating healthfully are easier when you create an environment that supports your efforts. This tip sheet provides simple, practical ideas to promote and assist you in leading a healthier lifestyle at home, work, school, and in your community.



Success at Home

Adapting your home environment to reinforce your active, healthy lifestyle is easy when you use these ideas.

Create an Environment that promotes more movement:

1. Run errands without using the car — go to the bank, video store, dry cleaner, or convenience store on foot.
2. Place your stationary bike or treadmill in a convenient place and set specific times to use it, like in the morning before work or school, or while watching your favorite TV programs.
3. Leave the room during TV commercials. Use the break to put away dishes and laundry, or accomplish other tasks that add movement and help boost your daily steps.
4. Walk while talking on the phone. Take your cell phone with you on a walk around the neighborhood.
5. Make a morning or evening walk as regular a part of your routine as brushing your teeth.
6. Make TV time work for you. Everyone can increase their physical activity by jogging in place, doing jumping jacks, crunches, push-ups, and other exercises that use body weight.
7. If you live close enough, walk to work. It's a fun physical activity for people of all ages, and helps conserve natural resources and protect the environment.
8. Spend leisure time with your family by being active. Play tag, basketball, soccer, or ride bikes.
9. Plan an active morning to keep from hitting the snooze button. Move your clock so you have to get out of bed to turn off the alarm. Have clothes out and ready for your walk or other activity, and post a reminder to yourself so you'll see it when you wake up.
10. Most people have the urge to be a couch potato now and then. If you're feeling fatigued at the end of the day, go for a quick walk as soon as you get home. You'll feel more energized and will be less likely to spend the evening on the sofa.
11. Find a walking partner or "buddy." Walking with someone else can help you stay committed, and offer enjoyable company.
12. Try walking 2 to 3 hours before going to sleep. Gently stretch your muscles after your walk, then engage in a relaxing activity like reading or taking a bath. You'll sleep better at night and feel healthier all day.



13. Along with your other weekly activities, write down times for physical activity and post a schedule. Even if you don't normally keep a weekly schedule, designate a few times to move more.
14. Piggyback short walks onto other times of day — for example, plan to get in 10 minutes when you wake up, 10 minutes at lunch, and 10 more when you get home from work.
15. Walk around your neighborhood while transporting your imagination with books on tape, a fun CD, or a customized “move more” playlist on your MP3 player or iPod. You'll find yourself walking farther than normal when you're engrossed in a great story or engaging music.

Fill Your Kitchen With Smart Food Choices

16. Stock your cupboards with convenient low-calorie snacks like pretzels, rice cakes, low-fat popcorn, and graham crackers.
17. Pre-wash mini carrots, celery, grapes, and apples for quick snacks.
18. Have dairy products on hand like low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese.
19. Satisfy chocolate cravings with low-fat pudding cups or frozen fudge bars.
20. Substitute ground turkey for beef. It decreases the calories, fat, and cholesterol of burgers or pasta dishes without sacrificing taste.
21. Keep canned and frozen vegetables as quick side dishes or for pastas, soups, casseroles, and pizza.
22. Avoid large packages of chips, cookies, and similar snacks. Instead, buy a single serving when a craving strikes.
23. Add black, garbanzo, or kidney beans to pasta dishes for more flavor, fiber, and protein.
24. Choose cuts of beef that are labeled round, lean, chuck, or loin.
25. Select no-sugar-added drinks like flavored water, iced tea, and low-fat milk to keep hydrated without adding calories.
26. Buy healthy, convenient breakfast foods like cereal, yogurt, fruit, and oatmeal. Studies show that most people who maintain weight loss eat breakfast regularly.
27. Stock “healthy snacks” on the top shelf in the refrigerator. Load up on fruits, vegetables, low-fat yogurt, and string cheese.
28. Drink water as an easy and refreshing alternative to sugary, higher calorie drinks. Store pre-cut lemon or lime wedges in your refrigerator or freezer for a refreshing addition to any glass!



- 29. Plant a garden or a few pots. Not only will you get the physical benefits of gardening, but you'll be able to enjoy delicious, fresh produce, too.
- 30. Place a bowl of fresh fruit in the center of your kitchen for easy access to a delicious, low-calorie, low-fat snack.
- 31. Opt for smaller portions of snack foods such as crackers, cookies, popcorn, and pretzels. If you buy a larger bag, dish out single servings into plastic snack-bags.
- 32. Plan your meals for the week. Take a few minutes to write a list before going to the grocery store. This will keep you from forgetting items you need, and prompt you to think of ingredients for your favorite quick and healthy recipes.
- 33. Instead of frying food, cook on your broiler or grill.
- 34. Make fresh fruit salads for dessert instead of baked goods or other sweets.
- 35. Put lemon, lime, or vinegar on vegetable side dishes for seasoning.
- 36. Make sure to have applesauce on hand. You can substitute it for butter in baking recipes.

Purchase The Right Tools For Food Preparation:

- 37. Steam vegetables to preserve nutrients and avoid added fat. Season with lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, or fresh herbs.
- 38. Keep salads crispy by using a salad spinner. You'll need less salad dressing when your greens aren't coated with excess water.
- 39. Stock your cabinets with nonstick pans and cooking spray.
- 40. Spray pans and food with an oil mister. You'll use less oil and save calories.
- 41. Use silicone-baking mats. These reusable, rubberized mats can be used with any baking sheet, and eliminate the need for greasing pans.
- 42. When making homemade soups or sauces, use a skimmer to remove the fat that often gathers on top.
- 43. Buy a salad dressing carafe and make your own low-fat dressing. It's easy to do and you can make it to your own taste.

Enjoy Your Meals And Feel Full On Fewer Calories

- 44. Savor your favorite food sparingly — there's no need to deny yourself when you monitor serving size.
- 45. Serve correct portion sizes before bringing dinner plates to the table to avoid overly large helpings and the temptation for seconds.



46. Are you really hungry? Many people overeat when they are bored, lonely, or feeling stressed. Help your Find healthy substitutes to emotional eating, like reading a book, talking to a friend, or going for a walk.
47. Serve dinner on appetizer plates to control portions.
48. Start meals with salad or broth-based soup. You'll feel fuller and eat less of your main course.
49. Freeze individual serving sizes of meals so you have a backup on busy days.
50. Slow down! Put down your utensils between bites to slow your eating pace.
51. Eat dinner at the table — talking with family members can help you avoid overeating before you feel full.
52. Listen to relaxing music while eating instead of sitting in front of the TV.
53. If you tend to snack while watching late-night TV, tackle the junk mail, spend time on a hobby, or drink a soothing blend of tea instead.
54. If you reach for food when you're angry, write down the reasons you feel upset, discuss the situation with a friend, or work toward resolving the source of your frustration.
55. Pour individual servings of snacks into bowls instead of eating out of the bag or package.

Success at Work

Even with a hectic schedule, these tips can help support efforts to create a healthier work environment.

Choose Foods and Restaurants That Support Your Efforts

56. Pack your lunch — homemade soups, sandwiches, and salads can be more healthful because you control the ingredients.
57. If you can leave the office, choose a lunch spot at least 1/2 mile away and enjoy a walk to and from to add an extra 2000 steps to your day.
58. Planning a meeting or party? Serve bottled water, fresh fruit, vegetable trays, mini bagels, salads, and whole-grain sandwich breads.
59. Grabbing breakfast on the run? Reach for healthy options — low-fat muffins, fresh fruit, smoothies, and water — instead of a donut and coffee.
60. Form an office committee to bring healthier foods to the cafeteria, such as whole grain tortilla wraps and a salad bar.



- 61.** Ask your vending company to stock healthier options like protein bars and baked chips.
- 62.** Keep foods away from your desk and eat them at planned times to avoid unmindful snacking.
- 63.** Encourage healthy decisions, such as drinking water instead of soda with “point-of-decision” signs and slogans.
- 64.** Bring a fun water bottle to school or the office and make an effort to drink several glasses of water. Staying hydrated perks up your energy and curbs your hunger.
- 65.** Parties can be a healthy eating challenge. Bring a low-calorie/low-fat dish to share so you’ll know there’s at least 1 healthy option. Snack on baby carrots or a piece of fruit before leaving home to help curb your appetite.
- 66.** Bring a healthy mid-afternoon snack to the office, like low-fat yogurt or a piece of fruit, so you won’t be tempted to visit the vending machine or fast-food chain.

Activate Strategies To “Fit In” More Movement

- 67.** Store a pair of comfortable shoes at the office for walks around the building or outside during breaks.
- 68.** Suggest giving your office stairwell a makeover. Decorate the walls with motivating messages or photos, give it a fresh coat of paint, add air fresheners, and install brighter bulbs. Pleasant surroundings promote more frequent use.
- 69.** If you can, walk to work, or take public transportation and walk from your stop to your office or campus to increase daily steps.
- 70.** Use the bathroom, water fountain, and vending machine farthest from your desk.
- 71.** Take short movement breaks, such as hand delivering documents to a coworker’s desk.
- 72.** Use your pedometer to map out 2000-step walking routes around your building.
- 73.** Encourage colleagues to hold meetings while walking outside. Fresh air boosts creativity and the extra steps will add up.
- 74.** Be a role model! Encourage your co-workers to be more active and eat more healthfully by doing these things yourself.
- 75.** Store an exercise band in your desk and take quick breaks to tone your body when you need a pickup.



- 76.** Host walking meetings when the group is small, or if you are meeting with just one other colleague.
- 77.** If you are a decision maker, offer incentives to your employees and staff for engaging in healthy lifestyles. Provide incentives for those who ride their bikes to work or school, or who increase their physical activity through a friendly competition, like the AOM Challenge.
- 78.** Encourage your co-workers to make healthy decisions such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator by posting fun, “point-of-decision” signs.
- 79.** Ask management to promote wellness by encouraging employees to walk around the building during their lunch hour, or to take brief walking breaks.

Success in Your Community

- 80.** Make your neighborhood a safe place to be active. Petition your city for ample streetlights, bike lanes, sidewalks, stop signs, and well-marked crosswalks.
- 81.** Create paths that connect favorite neighborhood spots so you can be safe walking or biking to school, the park, the library, and the grocery store.
- 82.** Organize a coalition of neighborhood parents that can take turns walking kids to school. Instead of a carpool, host a walking pool.
- 83.** Encourage restaurants to invest in smaller containers or serving dishes (for example, giving patrons the option of ordering an 8oz soda instead of a larger size), or to offer calorie counts for each of their menu items.
- 84.** Encourage safety by getting a local bicycle shop to give free tutorials on bicycle safety at your next neighborhood meeting or summer get-together.
- 85.** Keep your neighborhood safe for active living by creating or strengthening your Neighborhood Watch group.
- 86.** Make your neighborhood safer for pedestrians by implementing “traffic calming” techniques, designed to influence motorists to drive more slowly. One way to do this is to plant trees near the street. This technique is designed to “narrow” a driver’s field of vision, which causes them to slow down.
- 87.** Plant trees and flowers. Create a neighborhood that invites people to spend more time outside.
- 88.** Make your neighborhood foot-friendly for the aging population. Repair bumpy and broken sidewalks so older adults can easily navigate by foot. Provide safe resting spots (benches, picnic tables, etc.), easy-to-read signs, and well-lit streets and walking paths.



- 89.** Does your city have enough green space? Parks and open space should be an essential component of all new community design.
- 90.** Start an urban garden. Not only will this get you moving, but you can enjoy the delicious fruits (and vegetables!) of your labor.
- 91.** Highlight your city's assets and get your community moving in the process. Does your city have a good collection of art galleries, historic homes, gardens, sculptures, or ghost stories? Organize a walking tour.
- 92.** Collaborate with local realty firms to include maps of parks, bike paths, and recreational facilities with their home sales materials.
- 93.** Encourage restaurants to offer menu items at 1/2 the usual portion size, or to box 1/2 the meal prior to serving.
- 94.** Encourage citizens to be active by placing bike racks on public buses.
- 95.** Encourage your local elected officials to implement "smart growth" strategies for healthy living. (More information can be found at <http://smartgrowth.org> or www.activelivingleadership.org).
- 96.** Encourage developers in your community to build new communities and redevelop established communities for "mixed use," a term indicating that residential and commercial buildings exist in harmony with one another.
- 97.** Keep your community clean and clear of potential hazards such as snow and ice. Ask city administrators to consider sidewalks and bike paths as important as streets when it comes to removing debris and repairing cracks.
- 98.** Encourage your local newspaper to include a section on healthy living. A calendar of healthy living events could promote local races, farmers markets, and community walks.
- 99.** Get radio stations involved at races and health festivals. They will make the event more fun, and raise awareness for activities in your community at the same time.
- 100.** Ask local restaurants to encourage customers to choose vegetables as a side dish, or to save calories by choosing mustard instead of mayonnaise.